

**Amendment of the claims:**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1. **(currently amended)** A method for mass spectrometric analysis of a sample possibly containing or suspected of containing a multitude of one or more steroid hormones, comprising the steps:
  - (a) providing a sample containing or suspected of containing a multitude of one or more steroid hormones;
  - (b) deproteinating the sample;
  - (c) separating the ~~one or more~~ multitude of steroid hormones from the sample; and
  - (d) analyzing the ~~one or more~~ multitude of steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer, wherein the multitude of steroid hormones includes at least one hormone selected from the group consisting of estradiol, testosterone and DHEAs.
2. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the ~~one or more~~ multitude of steroid hormones are selected from the group consisting of Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), Dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate (DHEAS), Aldosterone, Cortisol, 11-Deoxycortisol, Androstenedione, Testosterone, Estradiol, 17-OH Progesterone, Progesterone, Allopregnanolone, 16-OH Estrone, 2-OH Estrone, Estrone, Estriol and Vitamin D.
3. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the sample possibly containing or suspected of containing the multitude of one or more

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steroid hormones is obtained from a biological sample selected from the group consisting of blood, plasma, serum, urine and saliva.

4. **(original)** The method of claim 3 wherein the biological sample is blood.
5. **(original)** The method of claim 3 wherein the biological sample is plasma.
6. **(original)** The method of claim 3 wherein the biological sample is serum.
7. **(original)** The method of claim 3 wherein the biological sample is urine.
8. **(original)** The method of claim 3 wherein the biological sample is saliva.
9. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein size of said sample ~~possibly containing~~ or suspected of containing the multitude of one or more steroid hormones is at least about 700  $\mu$ L.
10. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of deproteinating the sample comprises:
  - (a) adding acetonitrile, containing internal standards;
  - (b) vortexing the sample; and
  - (c) subjecting the sample to centrifugation.
11. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of deproteinating the sample comprises subjecting the sample to precipitation with an agent containing internal standards, said agent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol and salt.
12. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of separating the multitude of one or more steroid hormones from the sample comprises introducing the sample to a liquid chromatography apparatus comprising a column and subsequently eluting the hormones from the column.

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13. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 12 wherein said step of separating the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones from the sample comprises the use of a C-18 column.
14. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of separating the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones from the sample comprises the use of a combined liquid chromatography spectrometry apparatus.
15. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 14 wherein the multitude of steroid ~~one or more~~ steroid hormones are introduced into the mass spectrometer directly after being separated from the sample by way of an on-line extraction and use of a built-in switching valve.
16. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the mass spectrometer is a liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometer.
17. **(original)** The method according to claim 16 wherein the liquid chromatography tandem-mass spectrometer is equipped with an atmospheric pressure photoionization source.
18. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of analyzing the multitude of ~~one or more~~ steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer comprises an ionization technique selected from the group consisting of photoionization, electrospray ionization, atmospheric pressure chemical ionization, and electron capture ionization.
19. **(original)** The method according to claim 18 wherein said ionization technique is photoionization.
20. **(original)** The method according to claim 19 wherein said photoionization technique comprises the use of an atmospheric pressure photoionization source.

21. **(original)** The method according to claim 18 wherein said ionization is performed in positive mode.
22. **(original)** The method according to claim 18 wherein said ionization is performed in negative mode.
23. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of analyzing the multitude of one or more steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer comprises multiple reaction monitoring.
24. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of analyzing the multitude of one or more steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer comprises selected ion monitoring.
25. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the multitude of sample comprises a plurality of steroid hormones and they are analyzed simultaneously.
26. **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the multitude sample comprises a plurality of steroid hormones and they are analyzed sequentially.
27. **(currently amended)** A method of instructing an analysis of a sample that possibly contains or is suspected of containing a multitude of one or more steroid hormones, the method comprising providing instructions to prepare the sample according to steps (b) and (c) of claim 1 and analyze the one or more multitude of steroid hormones from the sample according to step (d) of claim 1, wherein the multitude of steroid hormones includes at least one hormone selected from the group consisting of estradiol, testosterone and DHEAs.
28. **(currently amended)** A system for the mass spectrometric analysis of a sample possibly containing or suspected of containing a multitude of one or more steroid hormones, comprising:

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- (a) reagents for deproteinating the sample, including internal standards;
- (b) reagents for analyzing the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer; and
- (c) a mass spectrometer, \_\_\_\_\_

wherein the multitude of steroid hormones includes at least one hormone selected from the group consisting of estradiol, testosterone and DHEAs.

29. **(original)** The system according to claim 28 wherein the mass spectrometer is a liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometer.
30. **(currently amended)** A kit for use in mass spectrometric analysis of a sample possibly containing or suspected of containing a multitude of ~~one or more~~ steroid hormones, wherein the multitude of steroid hormones includes at least one hormone selected from the group consisting of estradiol, testosterone and DHEAs. comprising:
- (a) reagents for deproteinating the sample, including internal standards;
  - (b) reagents for separating the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones from the sample;
  - (c) reagents for analyzing the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer;
  - (d) a solution of one or more steroid hormones; and
  - (e) instructions for analyzing the ~~one or more~~multitude of steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer.
31. **(original)** The kit according to claim 30 further comprising:
- (a) mobile phase solutions;

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- (b) a chromatography column; and
  - (c) a quality control specimen.
32. **(currently amended)** Use of a mass spectrometer for sequentially or simultaneously analyzing a sample possibly containing or suspected of containing a multitude of steroid a plurality of steroid-hormones, comprising:
- (a) providing a sample containing or suspected of containing a multitude of steroid hormones;
  - (b) deproteinating the sample;
  - (c) separating the multitude of steroid hormones from the sample; and
  - (d) analyzing the multitude of steroid hormones using a mass spectrometer,
- wherein the multitude of steroid hormones includes at least one hormone selected from the group consisting of estradiol, testosterone and DHEAs,
33. **(original)** The use according to claim 32 wherein the mass spectrometer is a liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometer.